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Greene, B.T., R. Powell, and R.W. Henderson. 2003. *Mastigodryas bruesi*.

Mastigodryas bruesi (Barbour)

Alsophis bruesi Barbour 1914:337. Type locality, "near St. George's, [St. George Parish,] Grenada." Holotype, Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ-R) 7792 (see **Remarks**), an adult male (SVL = 715 mm, TL = 305 mm), collected August–September 1910 by G.M. Allen and C.T. Brues (not examined by authors).
Drymobius boddaerti: Amaral 1929:28 (part).
Dromicus bruesi: Werner 1929:107.
Drymobius boddaerti bruesi: Barbour 1935:134.
Dryadophis bruesi: Stuart 1941:59.
Mastigodryas bruesi: Schwartz and Thomas 1975:189 (see **Remarks**).

• **CONTENT.** No subspecies are recognized.

• **DEFINITION.** *Mastigodryas bruesi* is a moderately sized colubrid, with a maximum SVL of 830 mm. Dorsal scale rows number 17 at midbody. Ventral scales number 187–199 in males and 194-208 in females; subcaudals number 115–128 in males and 114–133 in females. Supralabials are 9–10, infralabials 10–12, preoculars 1, and postoculars 2. Dorsal scales are smooth and the cloacal scute (anal scale) is divided.

Dorsal ground color ranges from blue-gray to brown. A pale lateral stripe occurs on scale rows 4–5 (rarely only on 4). A smudged ocular stripe extends from the nostril, through the eye, to the upper portion of the posterior supralabials. Chin, throat, ventrals, and subcaudals are white, pale yellow, or dirty yellow. The ventrals are suffused with gray at the anterior edges (Schwartz and Henderson 1991).

• **DIAGNOSIS.** *Mastigodryas bruesi* can be distinguished from all other Lesser Antillean colubrid snakes by having a divided cloacal scute (from *Clelia*) and two anterior temporals (from all species of *Alsophis* and *Liophis*) (Schwartz and Henderson 1985); note that *Pseudoboa* is no longer considered part of the Lesser Antillean fauna (Germano et al. 2003).

• **DESCRIPTIONS.** Detailed descriptions of the species include the original of Barbour (1914) and those in Stuart (1941) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **ILLUSTRATIONS.** Powell et al. (1996) and Malhotra and Thorpe (1999) included color photographs of specimens from St. Vincent and Bequia, respectively. Underwood et al. (1999) illustrated an individual from Barbados. Stuart (1941) included a black and white photo of the dorsal pattern.

• **DISTRIBUTION.** *Mastigodryas bruesi* is native to St. Vincent, the Grenadines (Bequia, Baliceaux, Île à Quatre, Mustique, Union Island, Carriacou, Île à Caille), and Grenada (including Green Island), where it is found in a variety of undisturbed and altered habitats ranging from dry thorn forest to mesic hillsides. Underwood et al. (1999) reported a population from Barbados and suggested that it was established recently, probably from St. Vincent and potentially via human agency. The range was illustrated previously in Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **FOSSIL RECORD.** None.

MAP. The distribution of *Mastigodryas bruesi*; the circle marks the type locality and dots indicate other known locality records (modified from Schwartz and Henderson 1991). The presumably introduced population on Barbados (Underwood et al. 1999) is not illustrated.

FIGURE. Adult *Mastigodryas bruesi* from 3.2 km ENE Layou, St. Patrick Parish, St. Vincent (photograph by R.A. Sajdak).

• **PERTINENT LITERATURE.** Henderson and Crother (1989) listed prey items (as did Schwartz and Henderson 1991) and noted activity and foraging mode. Hedges (1996) discussed probable geographic origins. Henderson and Powell (1999) discussed distribution and diet. Crother (1999) included the species in his phylogenetic study of West Indian amphibians and reptiles. Malhotra and Thorpe (1999) gave a cursory description and briefly discussed distribution and natural history. Underwood

et al. (1999) compared specimens from Barbados with specimens from St. Vincent and the Grenada Bank. Boos (2001) discussed taxonomic confusion with *Mastigodryas* on Trinidad and Tobago. Henderson and Powell (2001) noted habitat association.

The species also has been included under various names listed in the synonymy in checklists and faunal accounts by Amaral (1929), Barbour (1914, 1930b, 1935, 1937), Censky and Kaiser (1999), Frank and Ramus (1995), Germano et al. (2003), Groome (1970), Henderson (2002), MacLean et al. (1977), Powell et al. (1996), Schwartz and Henderson (1985, 1988, 1991), Schwartz and Thomas (1975), Underwood (1962), Werner (1929), and Williams (1999).

• **REMARKS.** Barbour (1914) listed MCZ 7792 as the "type," but Barbour and Loveridge (1929) listed MCZ 7792 as five "cotypes," and Stuart (1941) listed seven "cotypes." José Rosado (*in litt.*, 28.IV.2003) examined what may be a type series and associated information. He determined that one of several interpretations could be made when based on Barbour (1914), Barbour and Loveridge (1929), and the specimens themselves. We have taken the traditional approach and recognize MCZ-R-7792 as the holotype and associated specimens as paratypes (not "cotypes" or syntypes).

After Romer (1956) indicated that *Dryadophis* Stuart and *Mastigodryas* Amaral were synonyms, Smith (1963) proposed to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature that the name *Mastigodryas* be suppressed in favor of the more familiar name *Dryadophis*. The Commission never acted because Amaral (1964) argued that *Mastigodryas* should not be considered a synonym of *Dryadophis* and should be retained for monotypic *M. danieli* Amaral. Amaral (1964) based his conclusion on the fact that *M. danieli* lacks apical scale pits and has 70 subcaudals, whereas all species of *Dryadophis* have 79 or more subcaudals and paired apical scale pits. Smith and Larson (1974) agreed with Amaral (1964), as did Wilson and Meyer (1985), who retained *Dryadophis* for the Honduran species.

Nevertheless, Peters and Orejas-Miranda (1970), noting that Peters had examined the holotype of *M. danieli* and concluded that it was congeneric with *Dryadophis*, recognized that the name *Mastigodryas* Amaral had precedence over *Dryadophis* Stuart. However, they did not include the combination *M. bruesi*, presumably because the range of the species was outside the distributional limits they had established. Consequently, Schwartz and Thomas (1975) were the first to publish that combination, which since has been used exclusively in all references to the West Indian species. While acknowledging the arguments by Amaral (1964) and Smith and Larson (1974), we tentatively retain *Mastigodryas*, as did Savage (2002) most recently for all Costa Rican species.

• **ETYMOLOGY.** The specific epithet *bruesi* is a patronym honoring one of the collectors of the holotype.

• **COMMENT.** Schwartz and Henderson (1991) described *M. bruesi* as "diurnal; arboreal and terrestrial." The species' arboreal proclivities apparently provide some protection from predation by the introduced mongoose (Sajdak and Henderson 1991), which appears primarily responsible for the fact that these snakes are rare throughout much of their range. None of the Grenadians with whom we spoke in 2002 had seen any in years, although almost everyone noted that they had been common in earlier times. However, a member of Henderson's field party observed an individual near Morne Delice (St. David Parish) in February 2003. Barbour (1914) described it as "... apparently, the most abundant ophidian on the island [of Grenada]." Whether or not that was an accurate statement in 1914 is impossible to say, but certainly it does not apply today; the boid *Corallus grenadensis* is by far the most frequently encountered snake on Grenada. Although Barbour (1930a, 1930b, 1935, 1937) proclaimed the species extinct on St. Vincent and "very rare" on Grenada, Henderson found it moderately common on St. Vincent in the late 1980s and rare on Grenada in the period 1988–2003. Corke (1992) noted that the species was "relatively common," although he may have been referring solely to St. Vincent.

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